

Role of Infantry Units in Stability Operations

by CPT Jim Fosbrink



Figure 1. M2A2 in Bosnia (SFOR photo album).

Introduction

Infantry units currently deployed to Bosnia are primarily performing stability operations. The main type of stability operation performed is peace operations. Peace operations are divided into peacekeeping operations and peace enforcement operations. FM 100-5, **Operations**, defines peacekeeping operations as: "monitoring and facilitating implementation of truce agreements, and supporting diplomatic efforts to reach permanent political settlements." FM 100-5 defines peace enforcement as: "the actual or threatened application of military force to compel compliance with generally accepted resolutions or sanctions."

When IFOR deployed to Bosnia, they were primarily conducting the "peace enforcement" side of peace operations. The current political situation is not as hostile. SFOR is now conducting peacekeeping operations. International and civilian agencies are helping rebuild the infrastructure of the nation. They are performing missions such as teaching the local police western-style law enforcement techniques and monitoring elections. The presence of NATO soldiers in Bosnia allows the organizations to conduct their missions. One civilian employee from the United States of America stated he would not feel safe in Bosnia without the presence of soldiers. Most host nation civilians feel the same way.

Use of Infantry Assets in Stability Operations



Figure 2. Soldier on Hill 562 (Talon On-line).

Infantry companies primarily conduct three missions in Bosnia. They perform presence patrols through resettlement areas, conduct weapons site inspections, and assist in force protection for base camps. They also perform special missions such as securing radio station towers and election sites.

The presence patrols are an example of the stability imperative "Display the capability to apply force without threatening." The mechanized infantry companies have various levels to demonstrate their ability to apply force. They can conduct patrols with infantry squads, up-armored HMMWVs, M2A2 Bradley fighting vehicles, or M1A1 main battle tanks.

The presence patrols are normally platoon-size missions. Platoons conduct presence patrols both mounted and dismounted. Mechanized infantry companies are issued one up-armored HMMWV for every combat vehicle. The presence patrols are sometimes conducted in Bradley fighting vehicles and sometimes in up-armored HMMWVs. Tanks attached to mechanized infantry companies are seldom used. They stay parked on-line ready to deploy out the main gate. The tank crews use up-armored HMMWVs and perform presence patrols just like the infantry platoons.

One of the subordinate functions to peacekeeping operations is "Reporting and Monitoring." While on presence patrols, platoons come in contact with local civilians. They also observe items such as the construction of new buildings, availability of goods in stores, propaganda posters, and graffiti. Reporting this information to a higher headquarters allows units conducting information operations to know the results of their campaigns. The information can also be used to determine the required force protection level for units in the area.

The weapons site inspections are an example of the stability imperative "Arms Control." The inspections are conducted to keep hostilities from resuming by monitoring the equipment status of armies. Weapons sites are inspected on a set schedule depending on their size and the type of equipment stored. At the weapons sites in Bosnia, armies store vehicles, crew-served weapons, small arms, mortars, and mines. The weapons site inspections are platoon missions. The inspections are coordinated through a joint military commission representative assigned to the battalion. Bradley fighting vehicles are usually used to transport the platoon to the weapons site. The platoon leader counts the number of weapons and vehicles stored at the site. Extra weapons found are confiscated. If a site does not have all the weapons it is supposed to, the same number of weapons missing are confiscated. Once the army produces the missing weapons, the confiscated weapons are returned. (Example: During an inspection

soldiers discover four heavy machine guns are missing. Four heavy machine guns currently at the weapons site are seized and held until the unit produces the missing items.)

Performing force protection missions is an example of the stability operation imperative "Stress Force Protection." The perimeters around the base camps in Bosnia are not defended in the same way a unit would conduct a defense. Units are usually not assigned areas around the perimeters to defend. At some base camps no direct fire plan exists for defending.

The current situation does not call for these actions. The perimeters around the base camps are "secured." Concertina wire fences surround the forward operating bases. Infantry units are used to man observation posts and gates and to conduct roving patrols. Infantry units are, on occasion, tasked to provide a platoon for a quick-reaction force. The quick-reaction force is used for reinforcement of gates or for units conducting presence patrols.

Securing election sites is an example of the peace enforcement subordinate operation of "movement denial and guarantee." Infantry units set up traffic control posts near election sites to provide access to the election site. They keep disagreeing factions from setting up illegal checkpoints and road blocks. The units deny movement of military units along voting routes.

Infantry units work in conjunction with many civilian organizations during elections. This is an example of the stability operations imperative "maximize interagency, joint, and multinational cooperation." The Organization for Stability and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) supervises the actual electoral process to make sure it meets criteria set forth in the Dayton Peace Accord. The International Police Task Force (IPTF) monitors reorganization of local police forces and supervises local police security. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) ensures that displaced voters have an opportunity to vote. The European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM) monitors the electoral process and its impact on Europe. The Office of the High Representative (OHR) is a NATO-appointed official who oversees the peace process.

TTP

- Dismounted patrolling is essential for gathering information in support of information operations. One cannot observe many things from vehicles.
- In stability operations all available units are used to perform peacekeeping tasks. Mortar platoons can perform force protection tasks at base camps, thereby freeing maneuver units. Scout platoons can be used to collect information for the battalion by conducting presence patrols and observing named areas of interest around base camps.
- Units should deploy with enough soldiers to conduct force protection tasks. Units must plan to provide soldiers to man observation towers and gates prior to deploying.



Figure 3. Infantry Soldier supporting elections near Brcko (Talon On-line).

Integration of Battlefield Operating Systems into Operations

Maneuver: Currently, in addition to infantry units, two motorized cavalry squadrons conduct peacekeeping operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina. A mechanized infantry company team is attached to each squadron. The motorized cavalry squadrons are equipped with up-armored HMMWVs.

Fire Support: In-direct fire support assets are used to support presence patrols. The main targets are weapons storage sites and other areas of military significance. Mortars support force protection at base camps. Companies have fire support teams assigned to them. The fire support officer or NCO and an RTO go on every presence patrol.

Air Defense: No air threat exists. Avengers are located at forward operating bases but are used in nontypical ways. Their forward looking infrared sights are used to movement at night. Avengers are also used to "video tape" civil disturbances. The Army uses these videotapes as proof against claims by civilians attempting to spread detrimental propaganda.

Intelligence: Battalion intelligence officers produce lists of priority intelligence requirements (PIRs). Prior to presence patrols, the platoon leaders are briefed on the current situations and PIRs. They are debriefed upon return. Battalion intelligence officers need to begin using the new terms and symbols for stability and support operations found in FM 101-5-1, dated 30 Sep 97, to develop intelligence overlays for use by presence patrols. One of the battalion intelligence officers stressed the need for commanders to conduct their own intelligence preparation of the battlefield. Each of the company's area of responsibility in his battalion area of responsibility is about 4 kilometers square. Since patrols from the company are operating in the same area all the time, they were the most knowledgeable about it.

Mobility and Survivability: Engineers are task-organized to battalions but squads are not sliced down to companies. Engineers at the task-force level primarily keep track of mine removal activities and perform route reconnaissances.

Command and Control: Battalions man tactical operations centers to track current missions and plan upcoming missions. Companies man garrison-style command posts. The company command posts monitor company missions and report to the battalion tactical operations center.

Combat Service Support: Civilian contractors perform standard service support activities for the battalions. They operate dining facilities, build guard houses and observation towers, and provide telephone services. Support platoons are still responsible for ammunition and fuel resupply, delivering Class IV, and conducting LOGPAC operations for isolated companies and platoons.

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- Many different elements are collecting information during stability operations. Holding a weekly meeting with all of the different units performing missions ensures they are all working toward a common goal: providing an accurate description of the local situation. The description helps the battalion plan future missions. It also helps the battalion and higher units monitor the success of current information operations and peacekeeping missions.
- FM 101-5-1 contains operational terms and symbols pertaining to stability and support operations. Battalion intelligence officers should use these new symbols to create situation templates for their unit's area of responsibility. Units performing peacekeeping missions should receive copies of the template. They should be briefed on updates to the template before missions. They can update the templates while performing missions and give the data to the battalion S2.
- Due to the low threat level during stability operations, Avengers do not have an air defense mission. They are best used as mobile video tape recording platforms. They can be sent out with the quick-reaction force when a serious incident involving civilians occurs.

The Military Decision-Making Process

Units conduct the full military decision-making process for large operations. An example of a large operation is providing military support for the Republic of Srpska elections. Fragmentary orders (FRAGOs) are used to coordinate daily missions. Battalions produce FRAGOs organized in the five paragraph operations order format. The FRAGOs include matrices listing the missions subordinate units must conduct. Company commanders create matrices for platoon missions from the battalion FRAGOs. The platoon leaders abbreviate the planning process because they often conduct the same mission from day-to-day. The main graphic products used for operations are "cleared route" overlays and fire support overlays. The main product from the military decision-making process not being produced or used is the situation template.

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- Tasks with definitions need to be developed for peacekeeping operations. One suggestion for a task is "monitor:" to observe activity within a specified area and report it to a higher headquarters.

Troop-Leading Procedures

Most missions in stability operations are conducted by platoons. Platoon leaders conduct troop-leading procedures as described in manuals such as FM 7-7J, *Mechanized Infantry Platoon and Squad (Bradley)*. Many platoon leaders complained about not being able to conduct troop-leading procedures the same way as they were taught at the Infantry Officer Basic Course. They did not realize they were conducting troop-leading procedures correctly.

During stability operations, missions do not fit nicely into standardized formats. FM 7-7J states: "In combat, rarely will leaders have enough time to go through each step in detail. Leaders must use the procedure as outlined, if only in abbreviated form, to ensure nothing is left out of planning and preparation, and their soldiers understand the platoon and squad mission and prepare adequately." The platoons are not "in combat" but are continuously conducting missions.

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- Although the platoon leaders did not perform steps in order or use standardized formats for giving orders, troop-leading procedures were successfully used to prepare their platoons for patrols. When a unit performs the same mission day after day, steps can be abbreviated.



Figure 4. Safety brief prior to a presence patrol (CALL).

Training



Figure 5. Soldier firing nonlethal munitions (Talon on-line).

Many of the units deployed to Bosnia already included peace operations in their mission essential task list. This was not their first time deploying to Bosnia. The units who did deploy to Bosnia for the first time added peace operations to their mission essential task list. The collective tasks to support "peace operations" are found in "The 7th Army Training Command White Paper." The "White Paper" is a mission training plan for stability operations.

Platoons have missions they must perform daily. They perform "peace operations" collective tasks during their missions. Although well-trained in peace operations, little to no training is conducted on other collective tasks supporting other mission-essential tasks. It is very hard for units to find time to conduct collective training. One way is to attach a platoon with no current mission to another unit. The platoon performs duties for the other unit to allow a platoon to conduct collective training.

Infantry units conducted some special training to prepare for peacekeeping missions while in Bosnia. M203 gunners practiced firing nonlethal munitions. Military police platoons taught infantry soldiers riot control techniques. Units practiced conducting riot control training at the squad, platoon, and company level. Quick-reaction forces were units normally training on riot control techniques.

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- Units need to deploy with enough soldiers to conduct force protection tasks. Units must plan to provide soldiers to man observation towers and gates prior to deploying.
 - Many different elements are collecting information during stability operations. Holding a weekly meeting with all of the different units performing missions ensures they are all working toward a common goal. The common goal is to provide an accurate description of the local situation. The description helps the battalion plan future missions. It also helps the battalion and higher units monitor the success of current information operations and peacekeeping missions.
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 - Tasks with definitions should be developed for peacekeeping operations. One suggestion for a task is "monitor:" to observe activity within a specified area and report it to a higher headquarters.
 - Although platoon leaders did not perform troop-leading procedure steps in order or use standardized formats for giving orders, troop-leading procedures were successfully used to prepare their platoons for patrols. When a unit performs the same mission day after day, steps can be abbreviated.
 - Using platoons from other units to augment companies is one way to give them time to train collective tasks. Units should select times for conducting training on collective tasks and then request additional forces.
 - Mission essential task lists do not have to change to support stability operations. The key to not changing METLs is finding collective tasks which support the task of "Conducting Peace Operations."
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